

ULTIMATE

MARVEL[®] TEAM-UP



ISSUE
12

DOCTOR
STRANGE

SPIDER-MAN &

BENDIS
McKEEVER

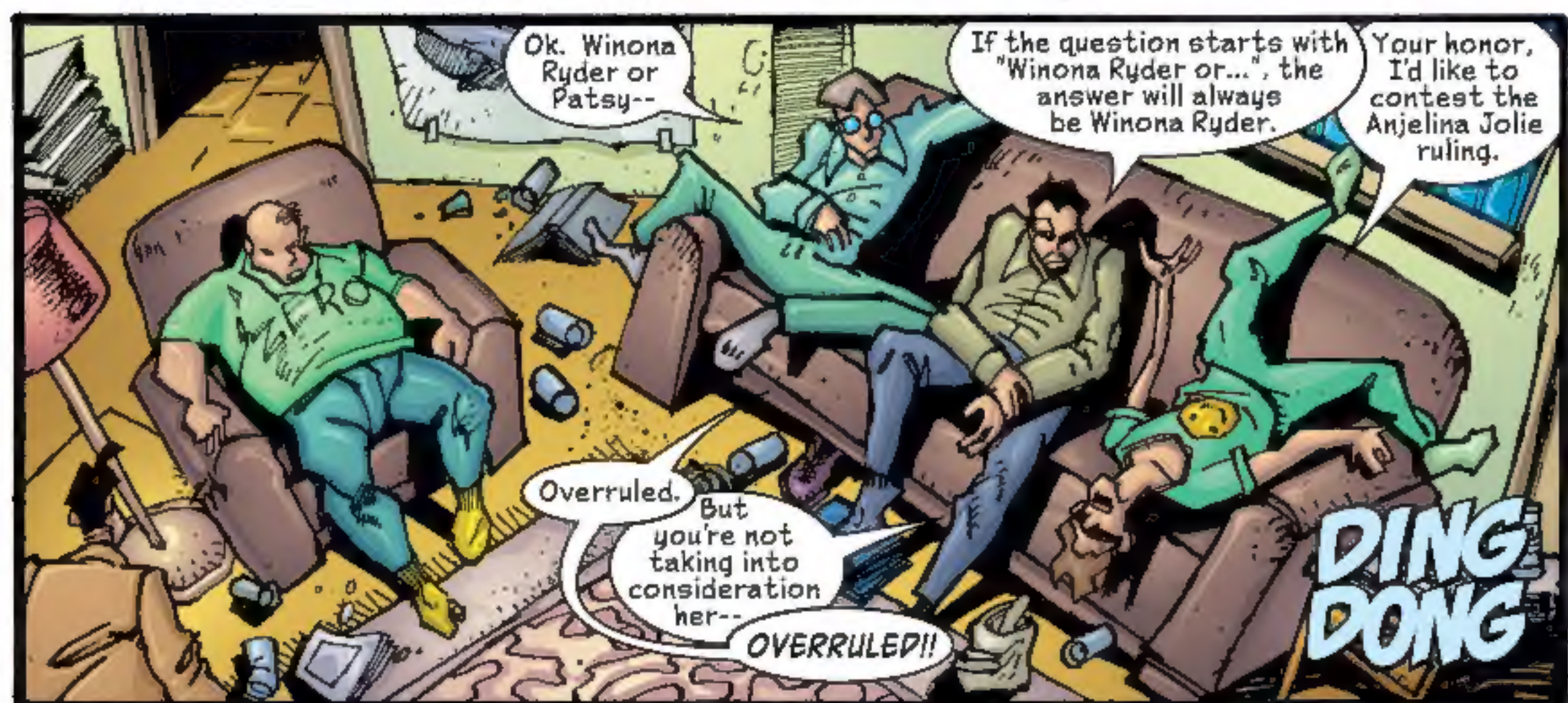




Brian Michael Bendis

Ted McKeever

Transparency Digital • Chris Eliopoulos • Brian Smith • Ralph Macchio • Joe Quesada • Bill Jemas





TODAY...

I am bored out of my freakin' mind.

A young man with this much power-- and not to mention this much responsibility-- shouldn't be this bored on a Saturday night.

Shouldn't I have some kind of superheroey thing to do?

I mean, something? Anything?

Some evil to thwart.

But there's nothing going on.

Nothin'.

Zippo.

Doesn't have to be pure evil.

Just, I don't know, forty percent evil.

Just enough evil where a thwarting is appropriate.

A nice, evil thwart.

Thwart.

That's a weird word... thwart.

...thwart.

Uh-- no offense but...

...could you, like, find somewhere else to talk to yourself?

I have work in six hours.

Oh, uh, yeah-- sorry.

I-- uh-- I didn't realize I was actually talking out loud.

Well, you were.

I-- I-I didn't just give out my secret identity, did I?

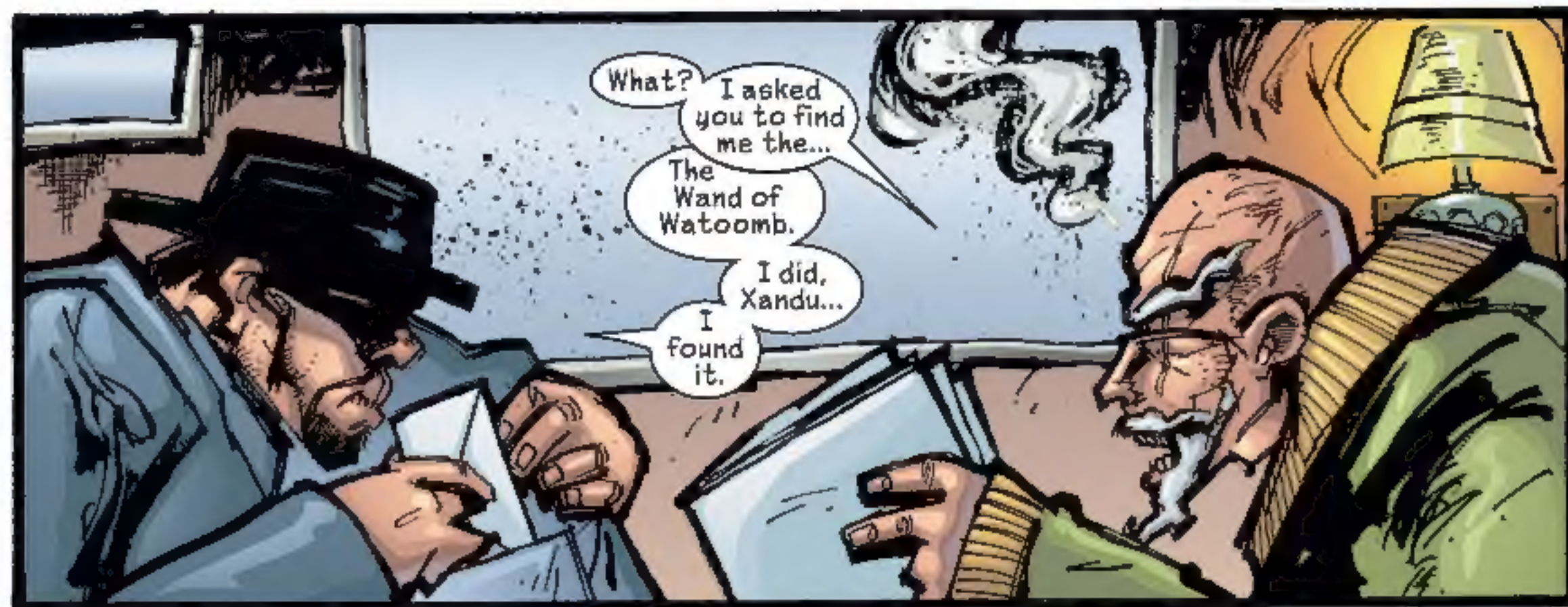
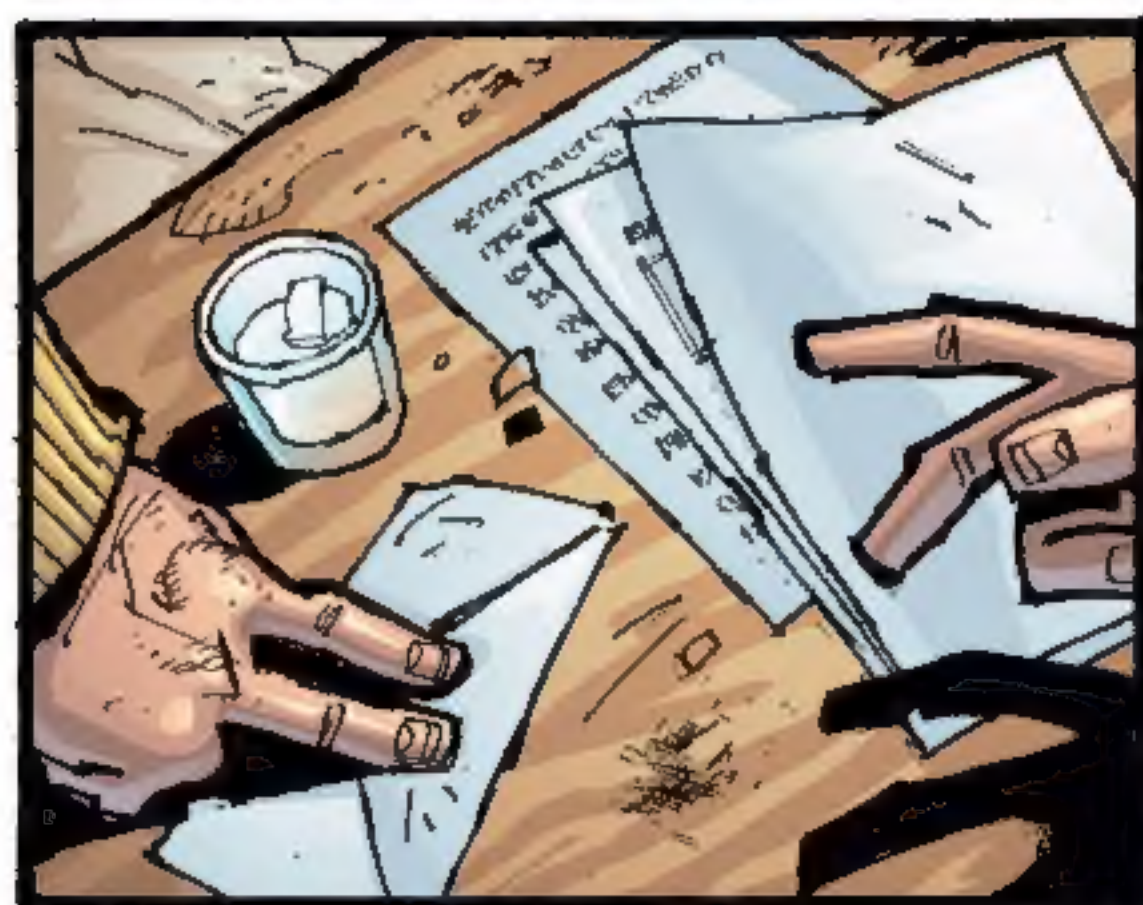
I didn't hear it, no.

Oh, whewww...

Ok? So, could you...?

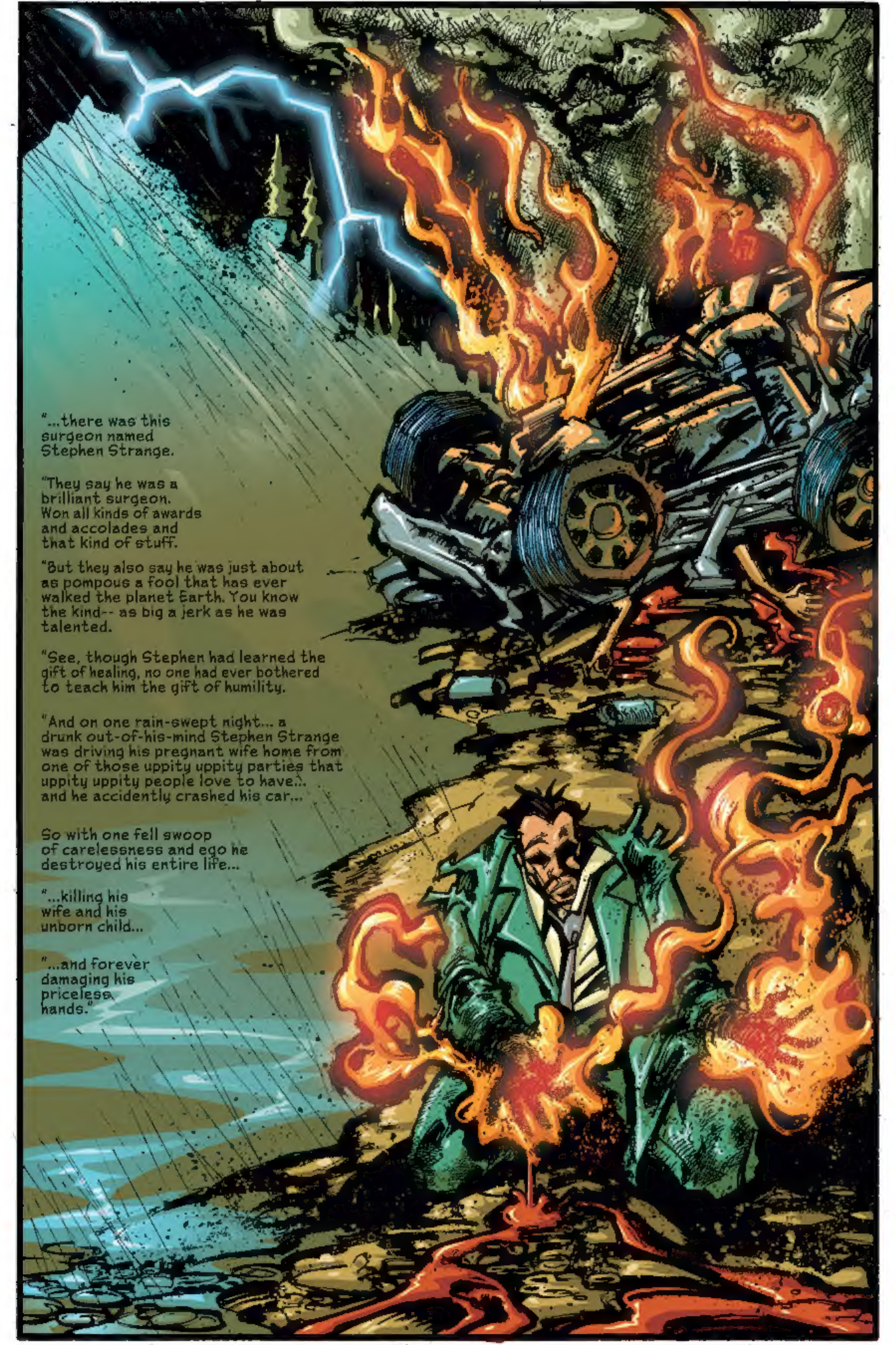
Sorry...











"...there was this surgeon named Stephen Strange.

"They say he was a brilliant surgeon. Won all kinds of awards and accolades and that kind of stuff.

"But they also say he was just about as pompous a fool that has ever walked the planet Earth. You know the kind-- as big a jerk as he was talented.

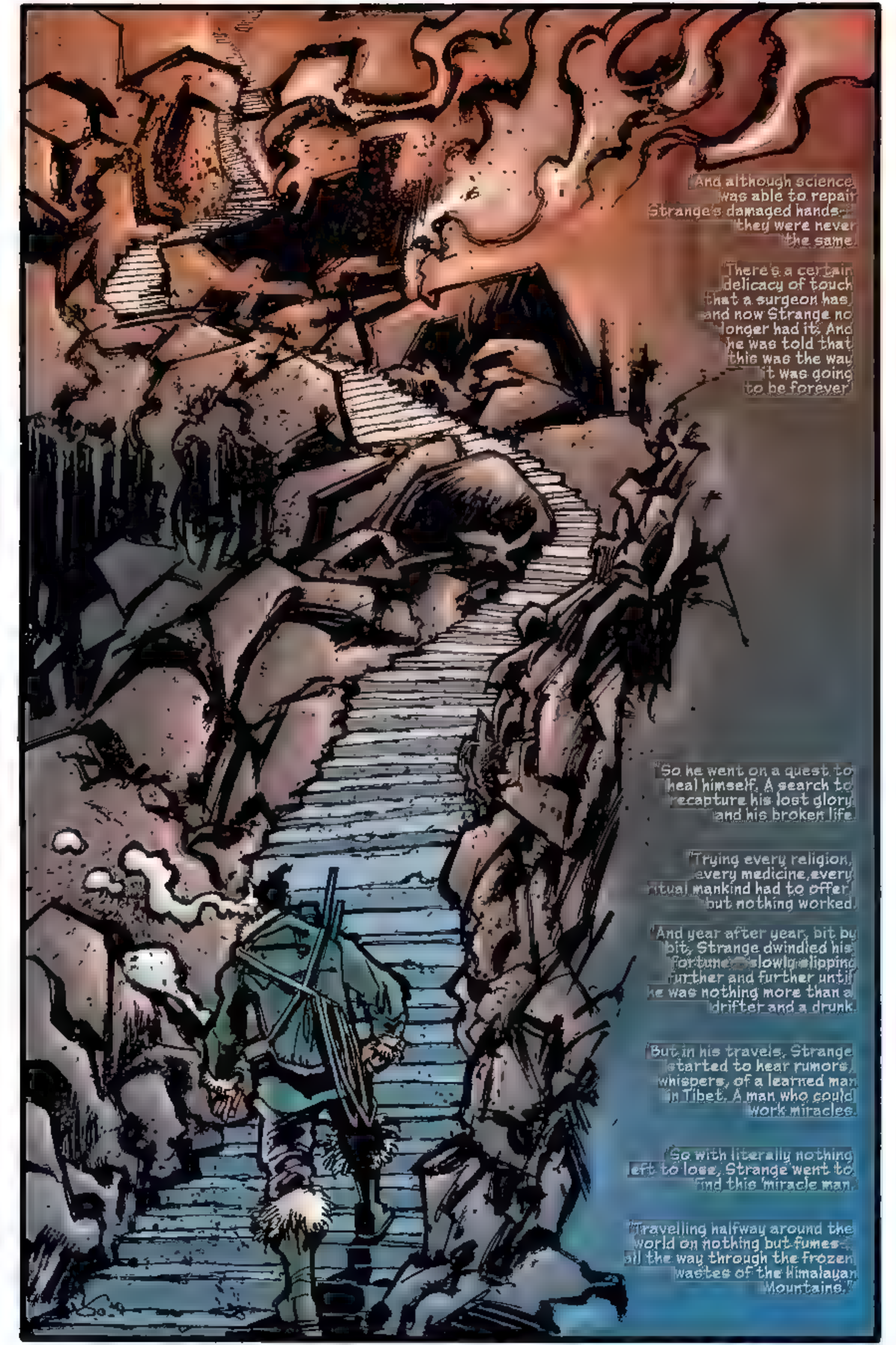
"See, though Stephen had learned the gift of healing, no one had ever bothered to teach him the gift of humility.

"And on one rain-swept night... a drunk out-of-his-mind Stephen Strange was driving his pregnant wife home from one of those uppity uppity parties that uppity uppity people love to have... and he accidentally crashed his car...

So with one fell swoop of carelessness and ego he destroyed his entire life...

"...killing his wife and his unborn child...

"...and forever damaging his priceless hands."



And although science
was able to repair
Strange's damaged hands,
they were never
the same.

There's a certain
delicacy of touch
that a surgeon has,
and now Strange no
longer had it. And
he was told that
this was the way
it was going
to be forever.

So he went on a quest to
heal himself. A search to
recapture his lost glory
and his broken life.

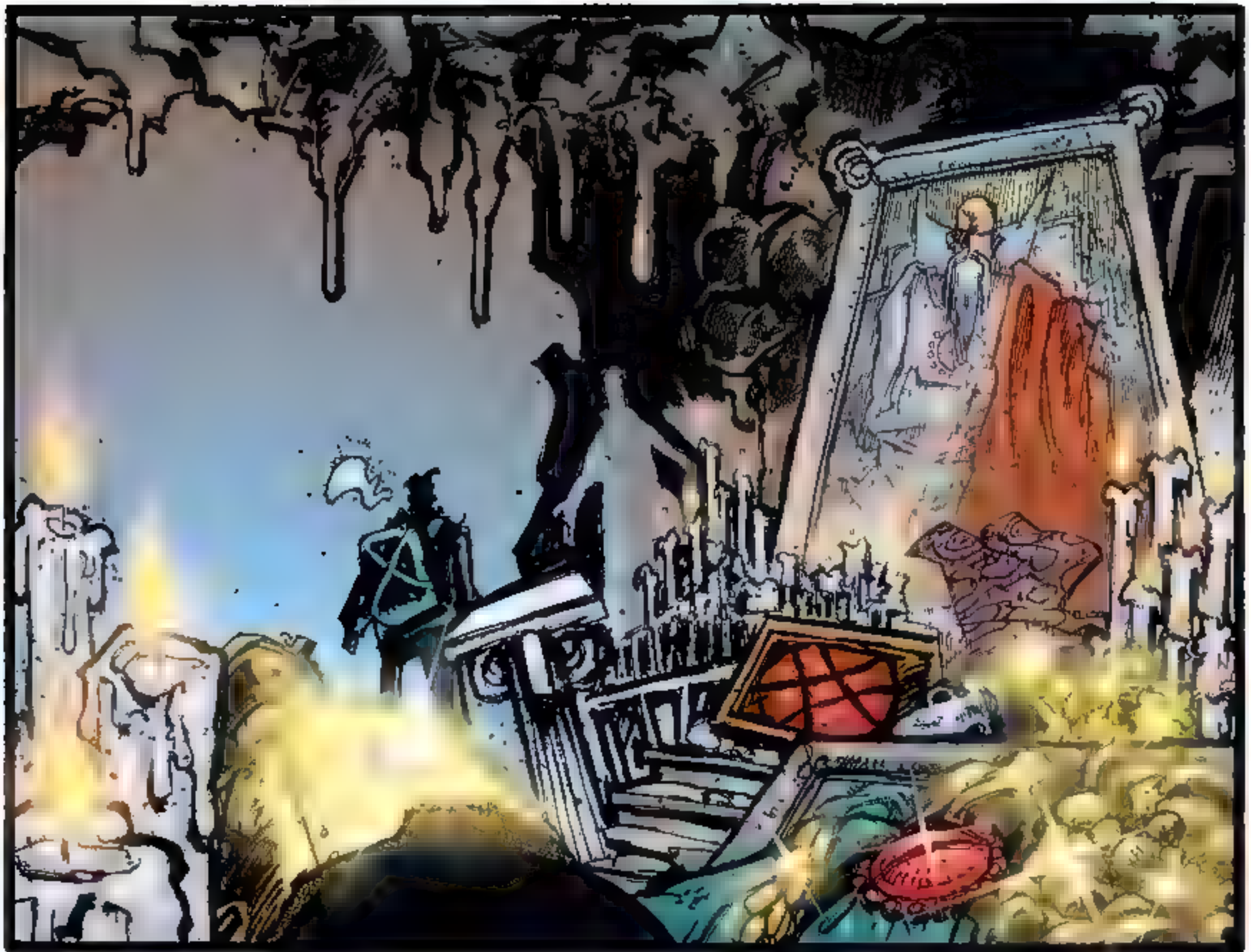
Trying every religion,
every medicine, every
ritual mankind had to offer,
but nothing worked.

And year after year, bit by
bit, Strange dwindled his
fortune, slowly slipping
further and further until
he was nothing more than a
drifter and a drunk.

But in his travels, Strange
started to hear rumors,
whispers, of a learned man
in Tibet. A man who could
work miracles.

So with literally nothing
left to lose, Strange went to
find this 'miracle man.'

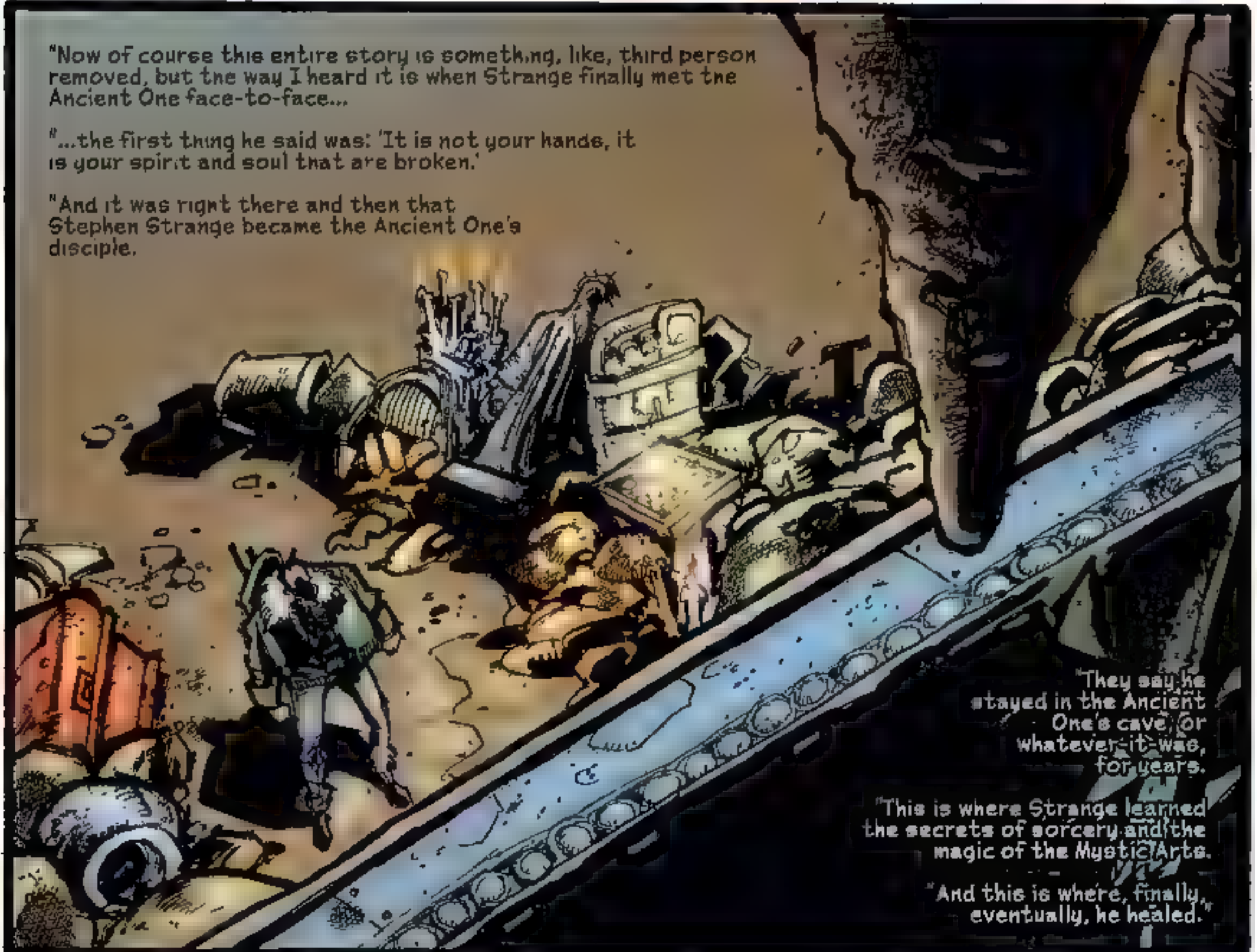
Travelling halfway around the
world on nothing but fumes,
all the way through the frozen
wastes of the Himalayan
Mountains.



"Now of course this entire story is something, like, third person removed, but the way I heard it is when Strange finally met the Ancient One face-to-face...

"...the first thing he said was: 'It is not your hands, it is your spirit and soul that are broken.'

"And it was right there and then that Stephen Strange became the Ancient One's disciple.



"They say he stayed in the Ancient One's cave, or whatever it was, for years.

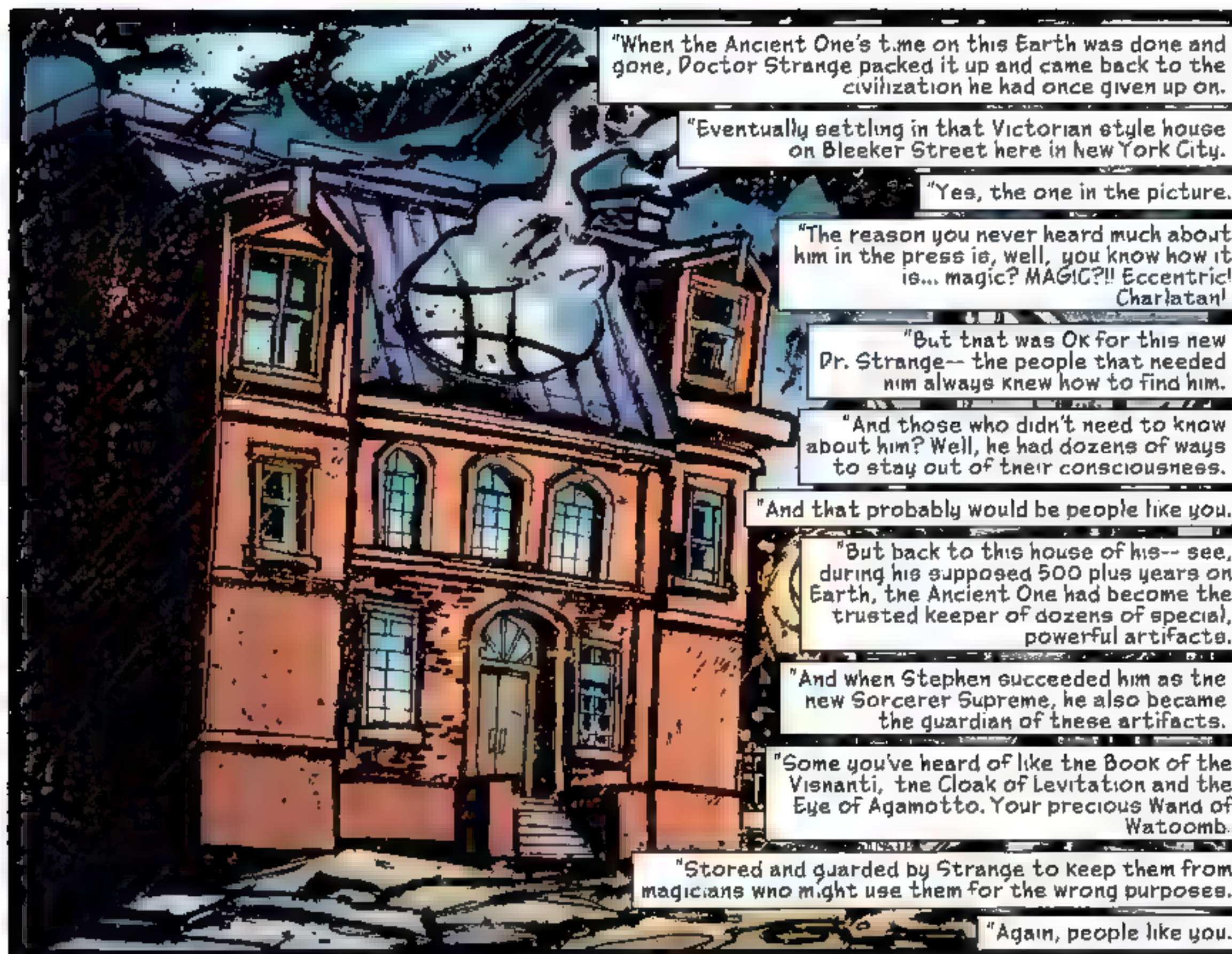
"This is where Strange learned the secrets of sorcery and the magic of the Mystic Arts.

"And this is where, finally, eventually, he healed."

"And that, they say, is the story of how
Dr. Strange became the most powerful
sorcerer on our plane of existence.



"But..."



"When the Ancient One's time on this Earth was done and gone, Doctor Strange packed it up and came back to the civilization he had once given up on.

"Eventually settling in that Victorian style house on Bleeker Street here in New York City.

"Yes, the one in the picture.

"The reason you never heard much about him in the press is, well, you know how it is... magic? MAGIC?! Eccentric! Charlatan!

"But that was OK for this new Dr. Strange-- the people that needed him always knew how to find him.

"And those who didn't need to know about him? Well, he had dozens of ways to stay out of their consciousness.

"And that probably would be people like you.

"But back to this house of his-- see, during his supposed 500 plus years on Earth, the Ancient One had become the trusted keeper of dozens of special, powerful artifacts.

"And when Stephen succeeded him as the new Sorcerer Supreme, he also became the guardian of these artifacts.

"Some you've heard of like the Book of the Vishanti, the Cloak of Levitation and the Eye of Agamotto. Your precious Wand of Watoomb.

"Stored and guarded by Strange to keep them from magicians who might use them for the wrong purposes.

"Again, people like you.

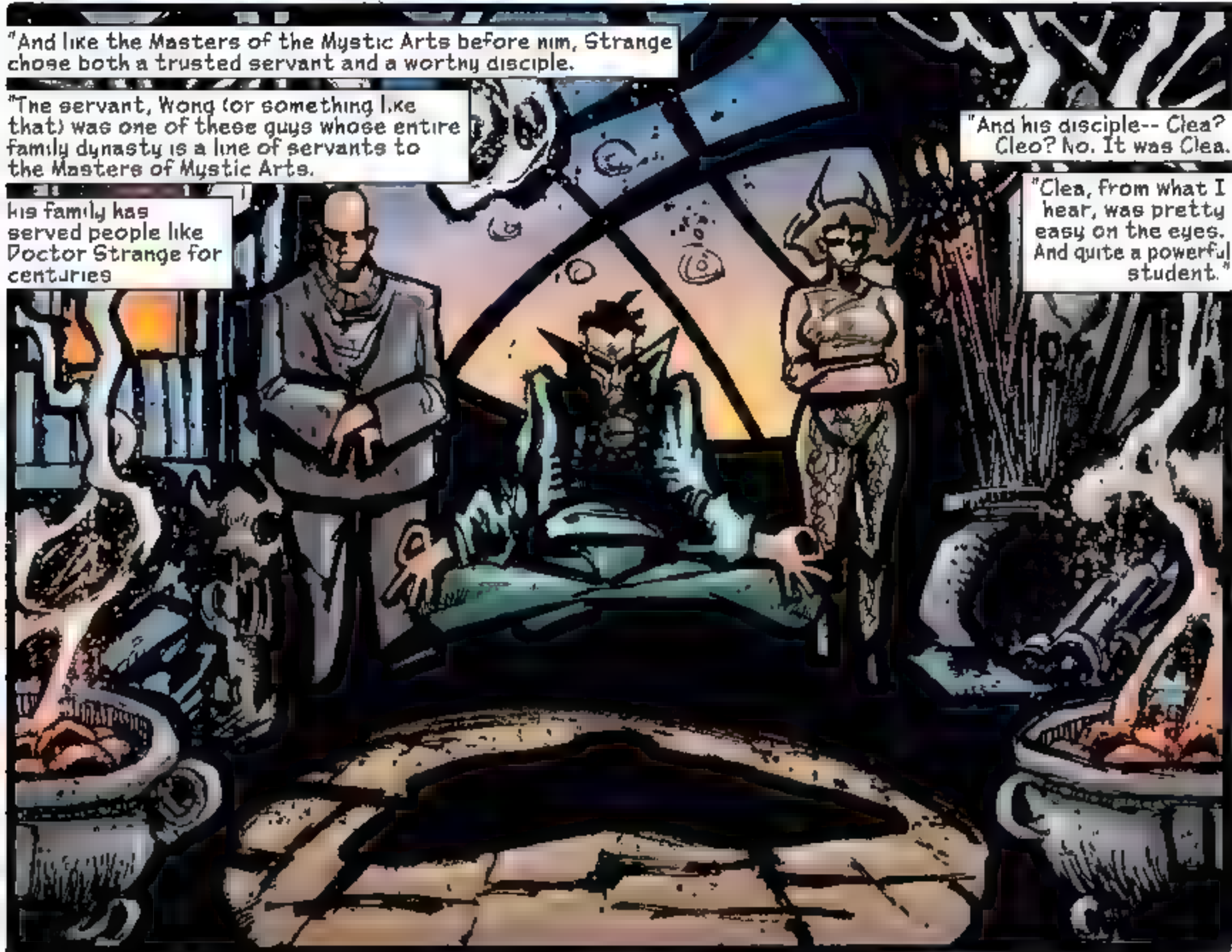
"And like the Masters of the Mystic Arts before him, Strange chose both a trusted servant and a worthy disciple.

"The servant, Wong (or something like that) was one of these guys whose entire family dynasty is a line of servants to the Masters of Mystic Arts.

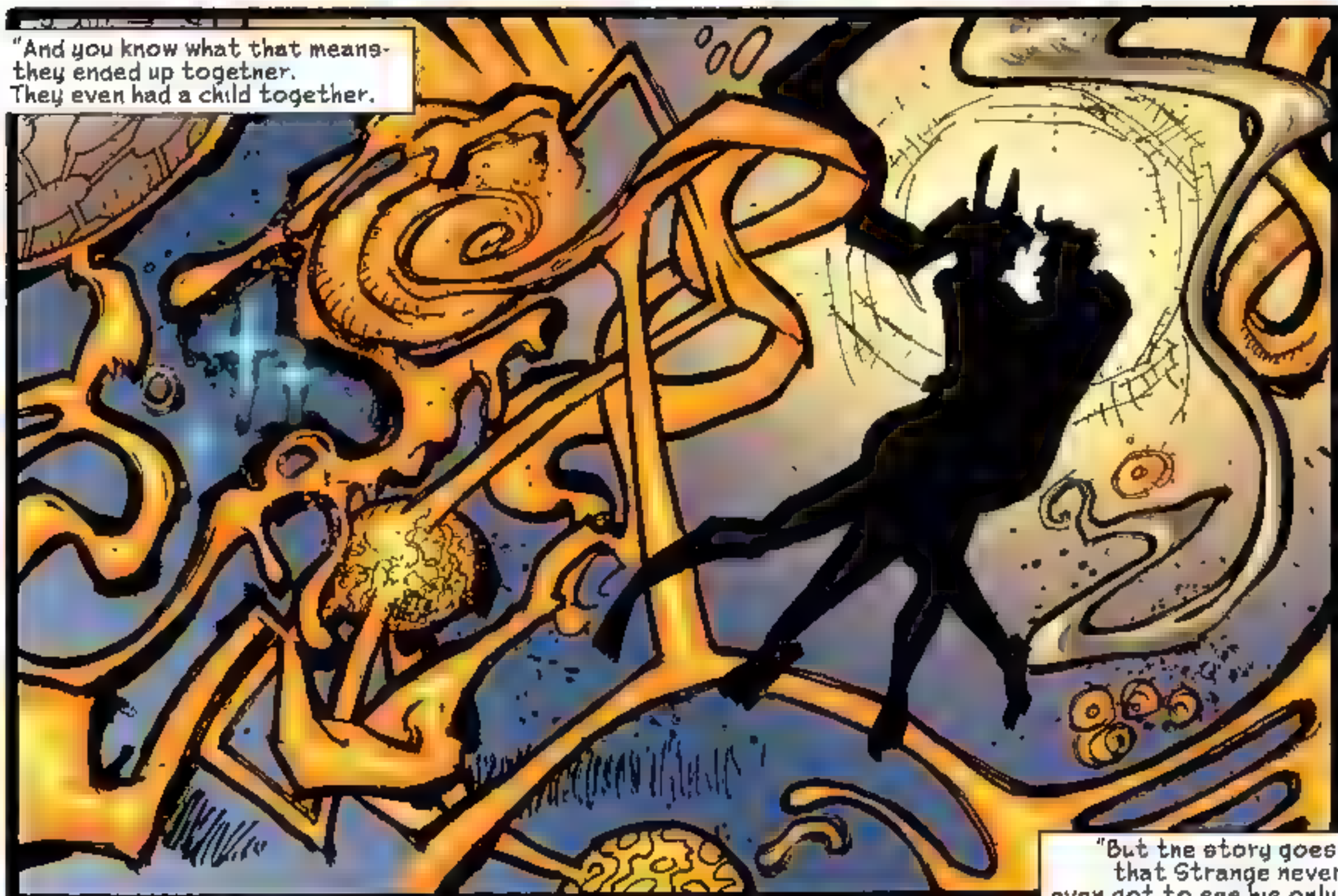
his family has served people like Doctor Strange for centuries

"And his disciple-- Clea? Cleo? No. It was Clea.

"Clea, from what I hear, was pretty easy on the eyes. And quite a powerful student."



"And you know what that means-- they ended up together. They even had a child together."



"But the story goes that Strange never even got to see his only child, because for some reason soon after Clea told him that they were indeed blessed..."

"...he disappeared. Gone missing."

"One minute he was meditating and the next minute he was gone."

"His astral body and his physical body-- just gone."

"No one ever found him. Twenty years and not a peep. He just ceased to exist."



"And Clea? Whoo boy Word is Clea was totally destroyed"

"And she looked everywhere. She travelled the world just like Strange had years before-- lost-- not knowing where to look."

"She even travelled the route her lover had when he found the Ancient One."

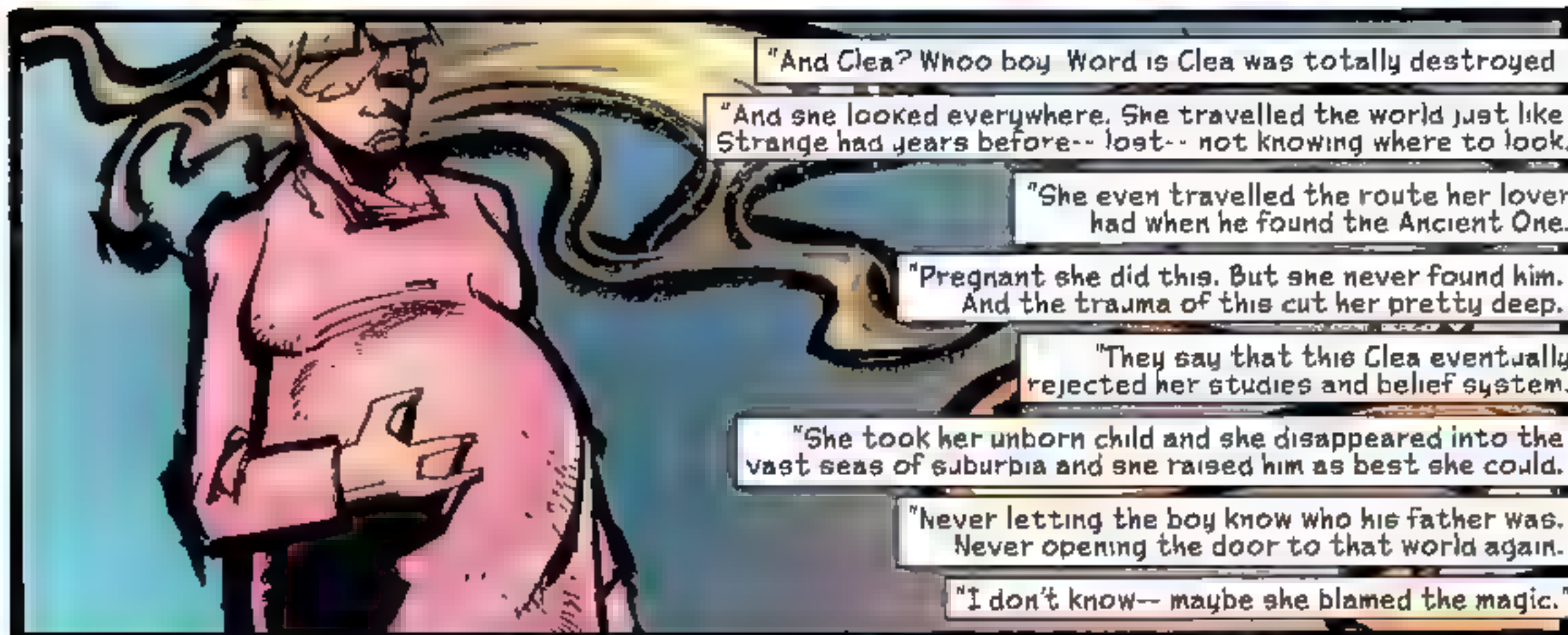
"Pregnant she did this. But she never found him. And the trauma of this cut her pretty deep."


"They say that this Clea eventually rejected her studies and belief system."

"She took her unborn child and she disappeared into the vast seas of suburbia and she raised him as best she could."

"Never letting the boy know who his father was. Never opening the door to that world again."

"I don't know-- maybe she blamed the magic."

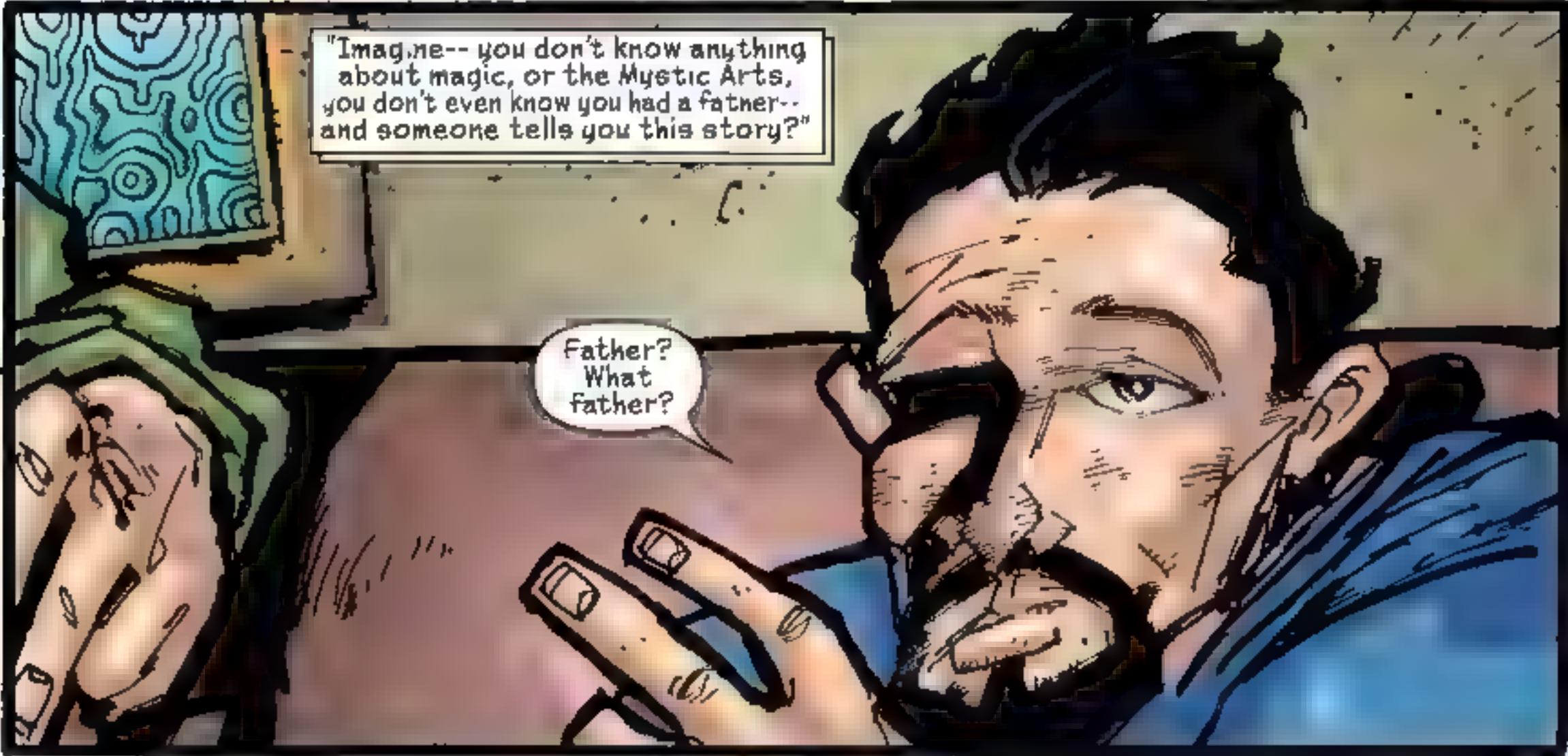




"But what Clea and maybe even Strange didn't know was that there is a system to such things-- and a pretty chauvinistic one at that."

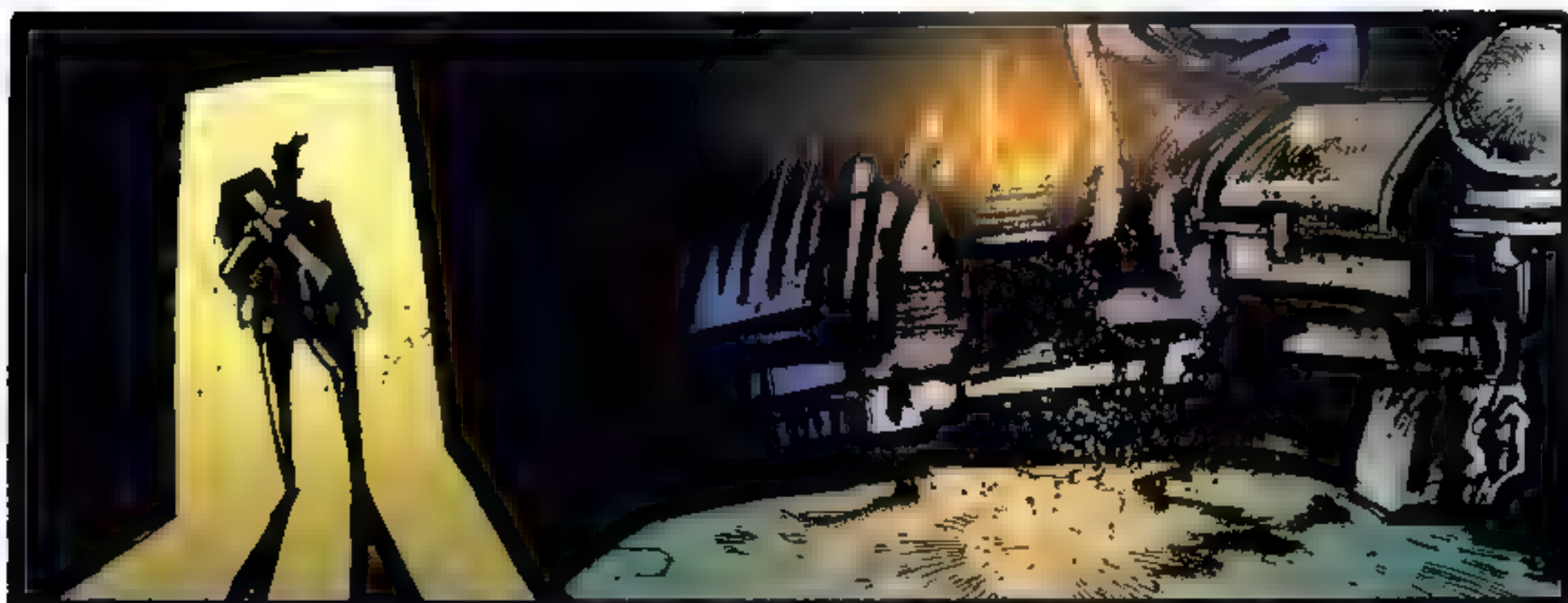
"Wong knew that it was his job to 'hold the fort' as they say until Strange's son was of age."

"On his twenty-first birthday, unbeknownst to Clea, Wong shows up out of nowhere, and lays this whopper of a tale on her young son. The story of his legacy. The story I am telling you now."



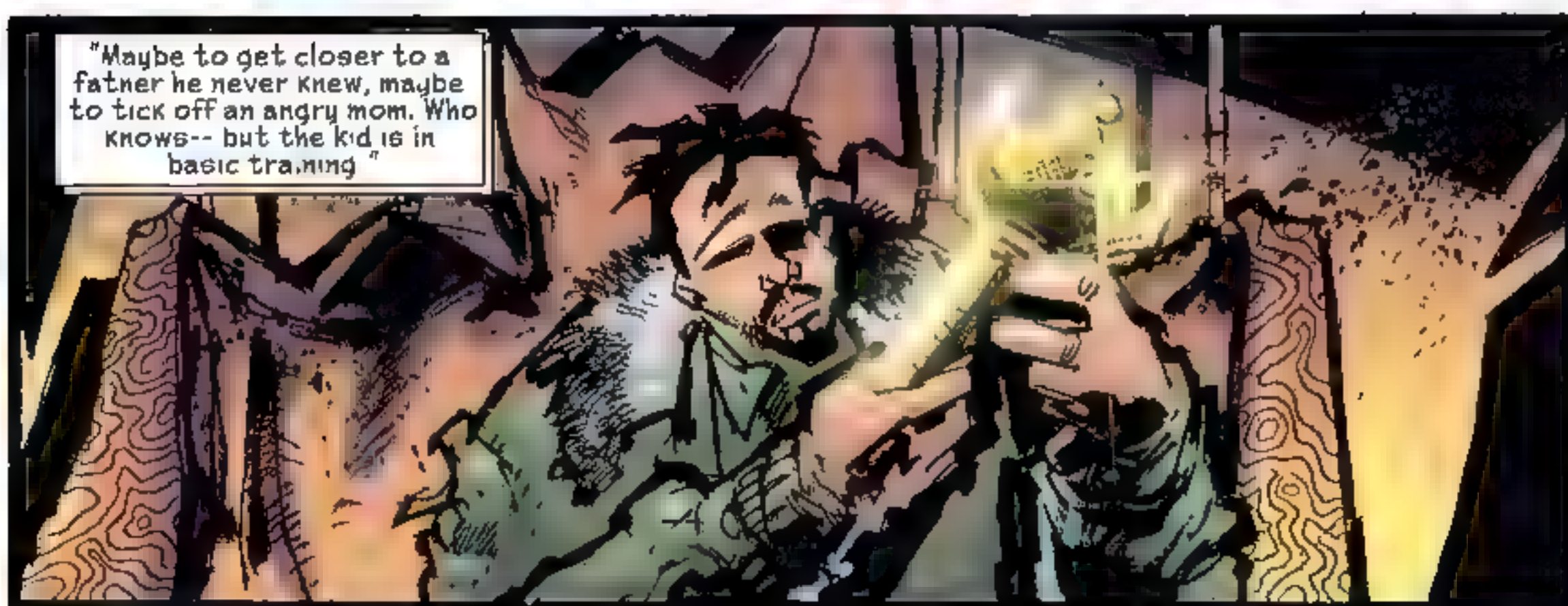
"Imagine-- you don't know anything about magic, or the Mystic Arts, you don't even know you had a father-- and someone tells you this story?"

Father?
What father?



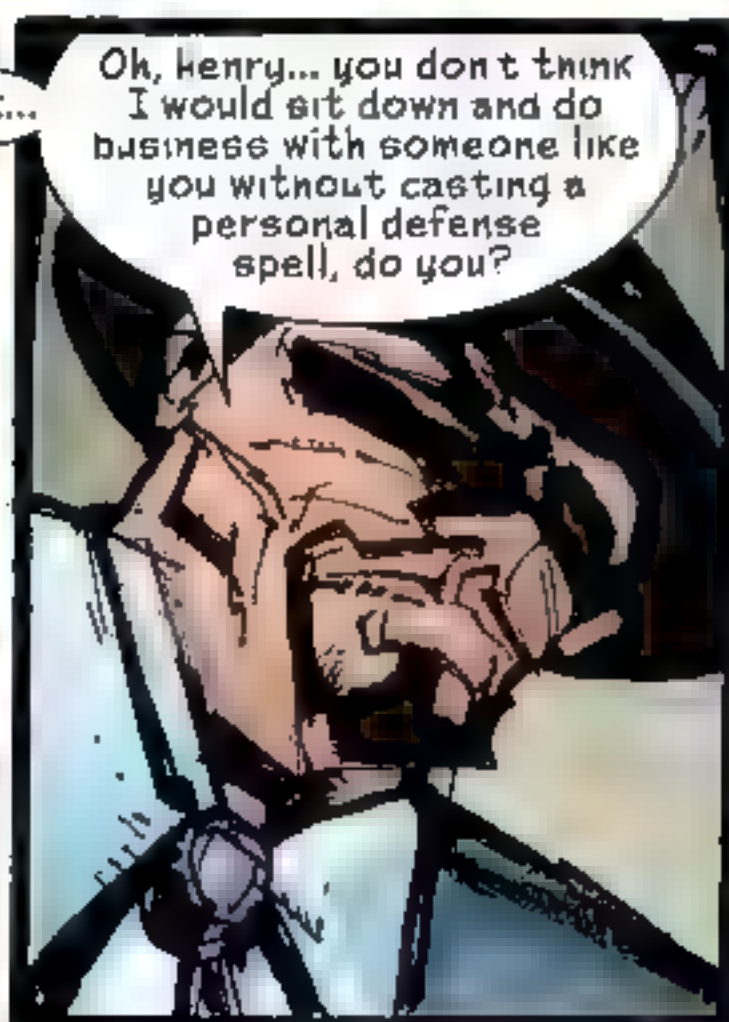
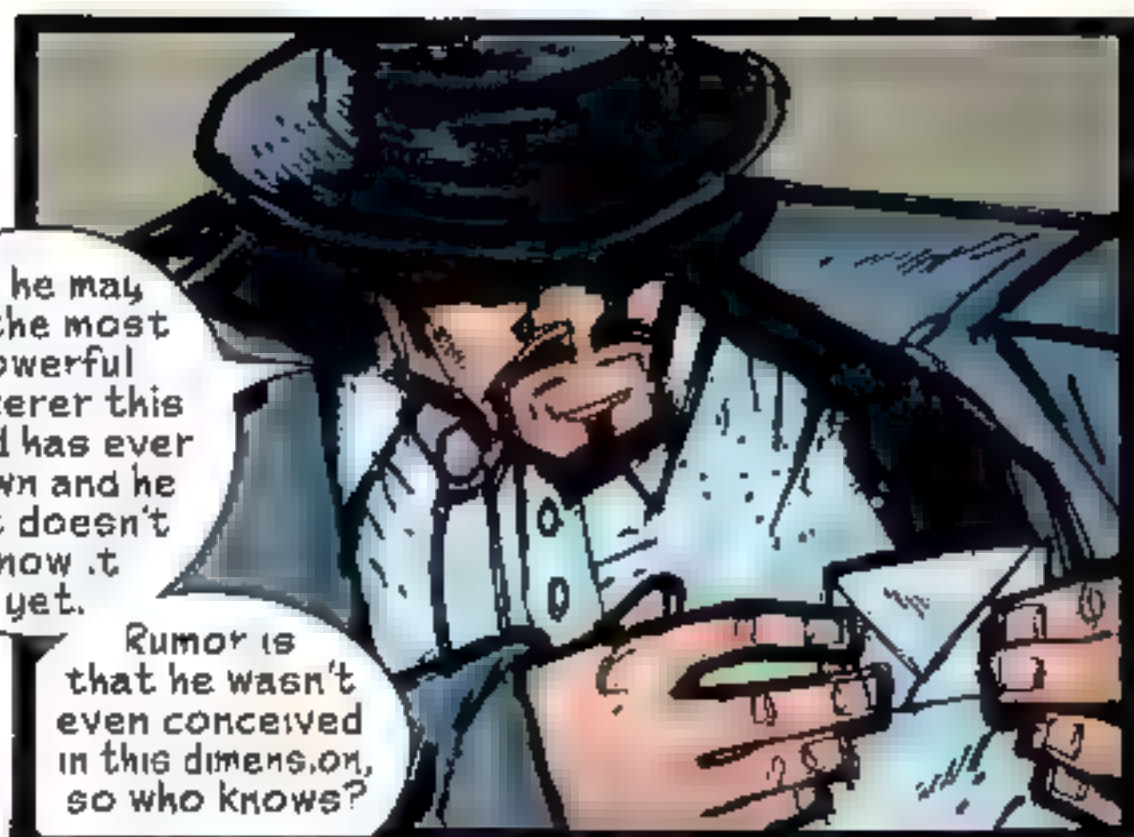
"Wong tells him that if he chooses to do so he would be trained like his father before him."

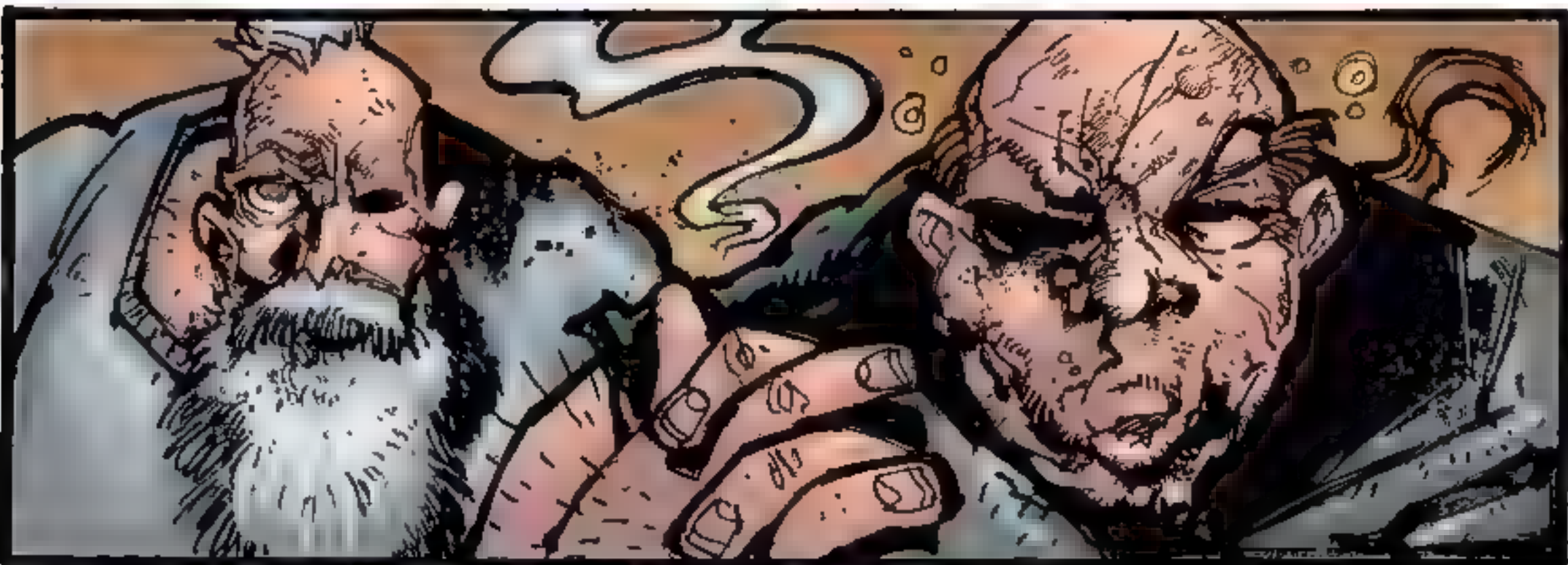
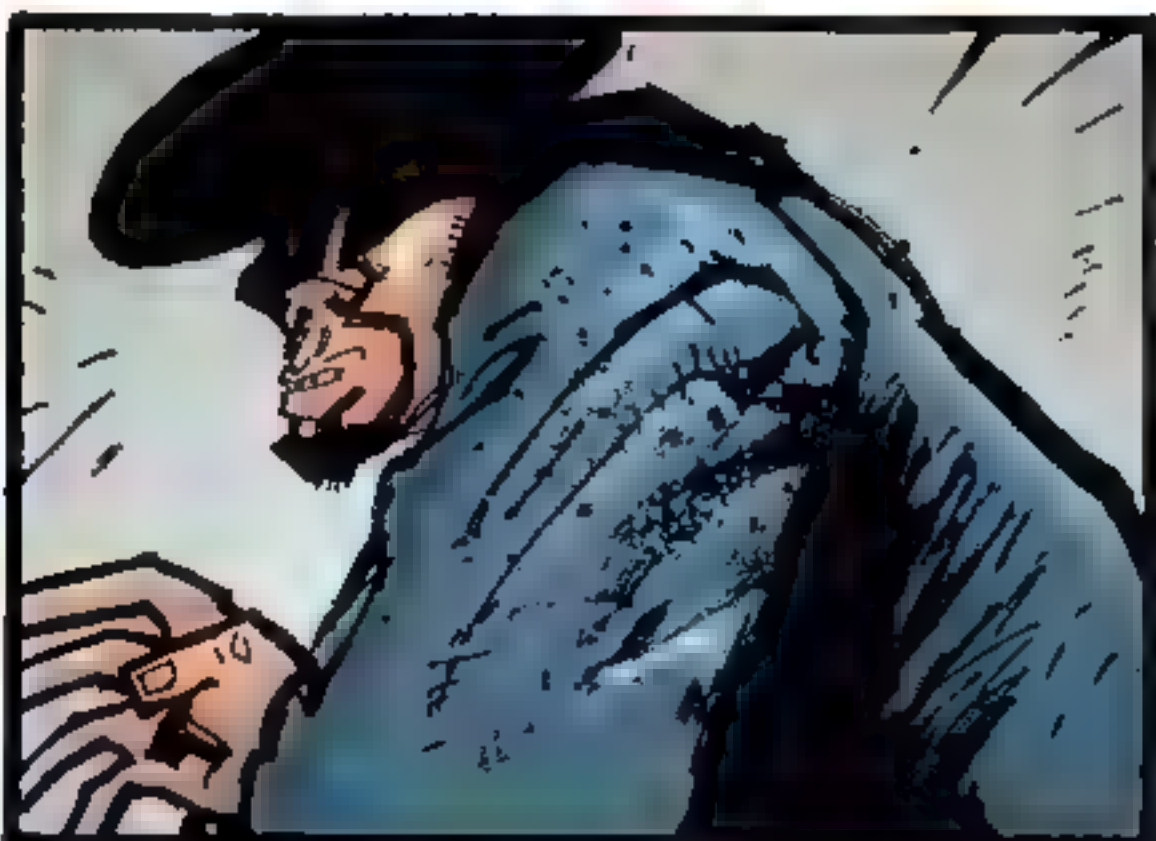
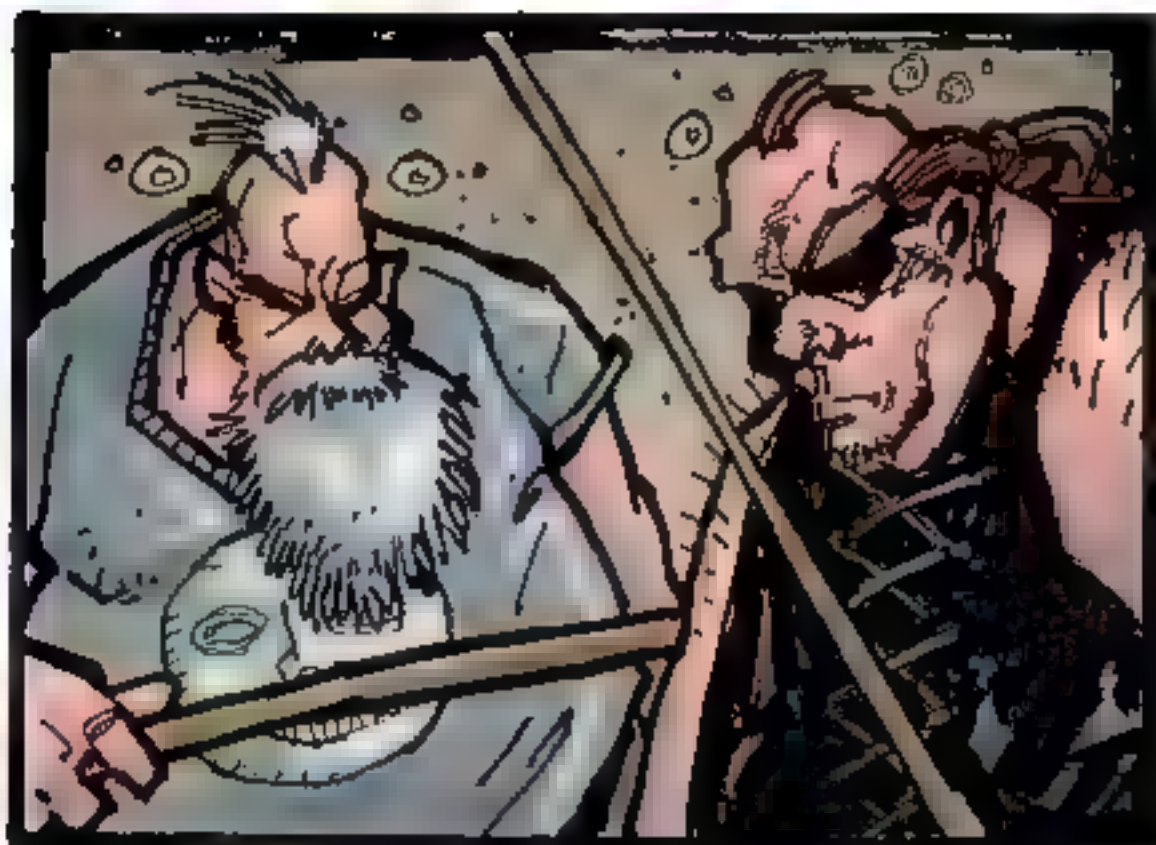
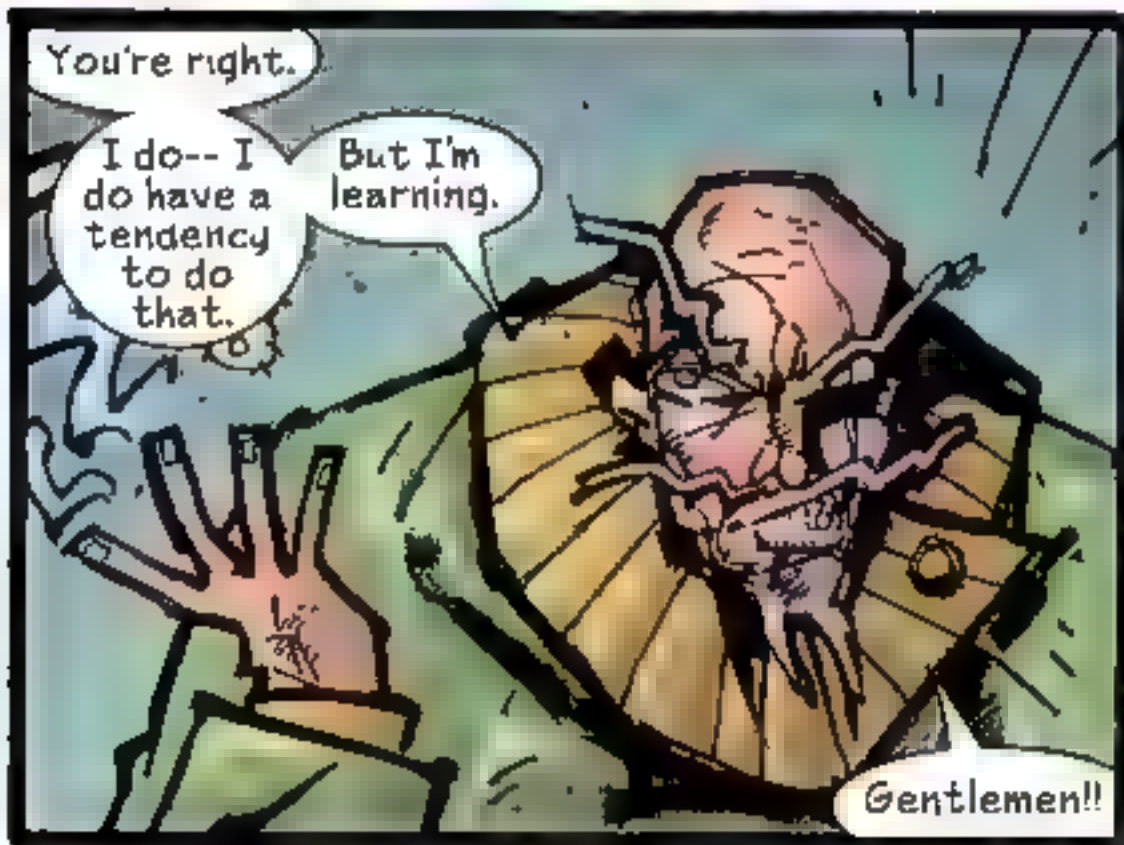
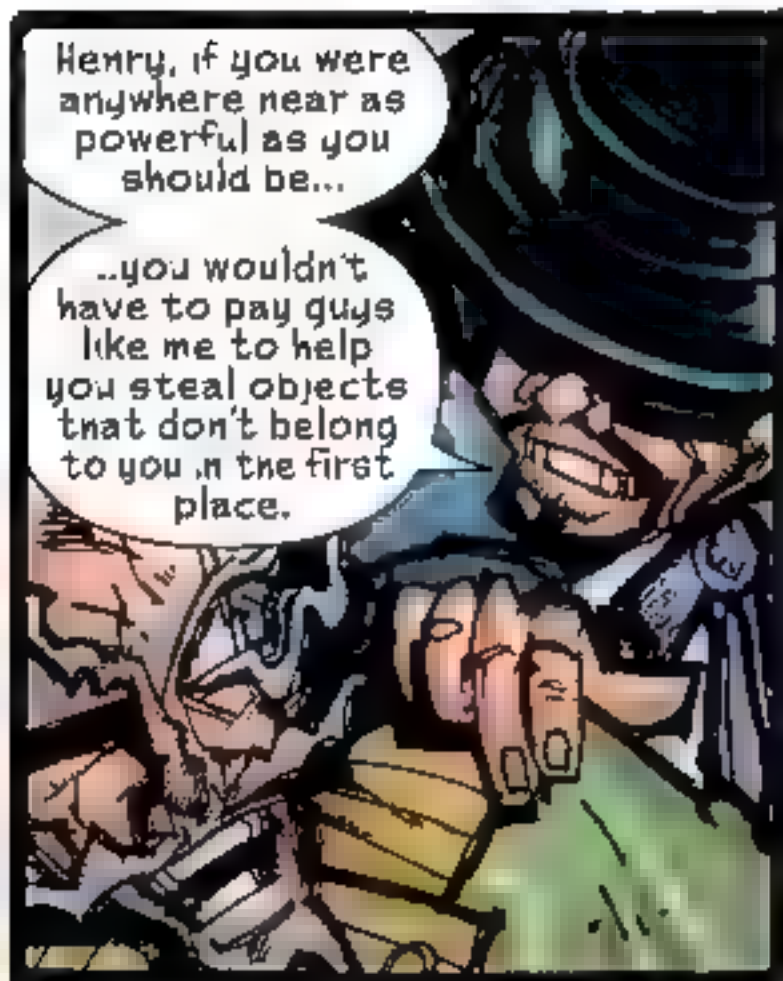
"And-- hey I don't know why the kid did it-- but he did."



"Maybe to get closer to a father he never knew, maybe to tick off an angry mom. Who knows-- but the kid is in basic training."











I can't have you people fighting over me like this--

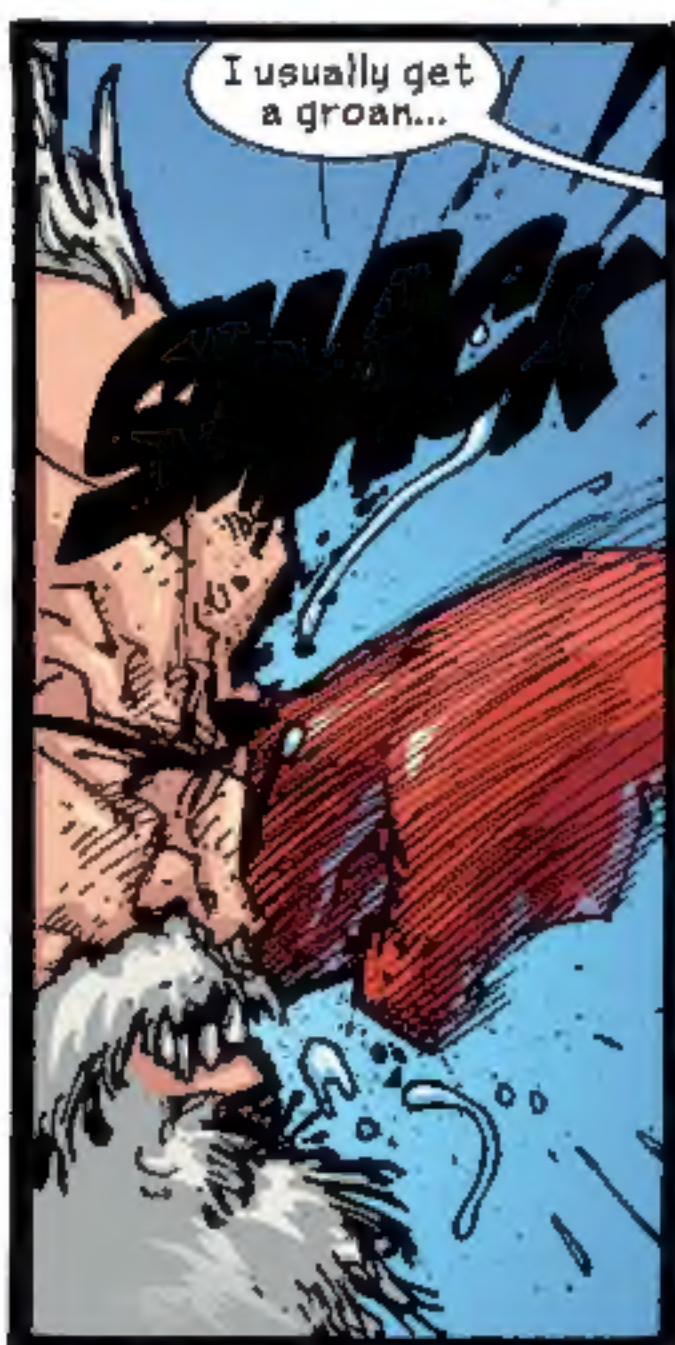


...sure I look cute in the tights but...



Okay, so it wasn't that great of a joke.

But, come on, guys, I can't banter all by myself. You gotta give me something to work with...



I usually get a groan...



... or an angry comeback or something.



